



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
St. Paul District

# Information Paper

## Environmental Protection: Mississippi River, Island 42, Wabasha Co., Minn.



*Excavated channel and backwater area at Island 42, Minnesota.*

### Contact

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### Location/Description

The site is located on the Minnesota side of the Mississippi River channel, approximately 20 miles upstream of Winona, Minnesota. The site lies within the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. Backwater sloughs at Island 42 did not receive adequate water flows from the Mississippi River at normal pool levels. This resulted in stagnation and dissolved oxygen depletion in these waters during late summer and winter. Also, a major limiting factor for ground-nesting waterfowl was the lack of adequate nesting cover.

The Island 42 habitat project provides water flows to a semi-isolated backwater area via two 80-foot long culverts and a 900-foot long by 50-foot wide channel to alleviate low dissolved oxygen problems in the backwater. In addition, approximately 36,000 cubic yards of material was dredged from about seven acres of the backwater area, deepening it from about two feet to five feet for fish habitat. The dredged material was placed on an abandoned placement site adjacent to the backwater area.

### Status

The Rivers and Harbors Unit of the Corps of Engineers completed construction of the project in June 1987. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has assumed the operation and maintenance responsibilities of the project. A performance evaluation report was completed in August 1995. Generally, dissolved oxygen levels in the backwater have been maintained above the desired 5 mg/l level by opening the gate structure for summer and winter flows and closing the gate during the spring high water. A fisheries survey in 1990 indicated high use of the area by fishermen. Vegetation monitoring indicates that the area has maintained good overall cover for waterfowl nesting.

### Authority

The Island 42 Habitat Project was planned under the authority of the Upper Mississippi River System - Environmental Management Program (EMP) and constructed in accordance with an Environmental Assessment dated August 1986. The EMP was authorized by Section 1103 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986, and reauthorized by the Water Resources Development Act of 1999.

The Island 42 Habitat Project was planned and designed as part of a cooperative effort between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

### Fiscal

Project design and construction costs were 100 percent Federal because the project is located on national wildlife refuge lands. Operation and maintenance costs are 100 percent Federal (a responsibility of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service).

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| Federal Cost     | \$262,000 |
| Non-Federal Cost | \$0       |
| Total Cost       | \$262,000 |